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Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

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President: A.Goede, 8 Bath St., Battery Point, Hobart, 7000.

Secretary: Mrs. P.Brabon, 122 Augusta Rd., Lenah Valley, 7008.

Editorial.

The editors of the Spiel are back on the job again after a welcome rest. There has been quite a lot of caving activity since Christmas mostly by small parties. We were pleased to have the opportunity to join forces with cavers from Queensland, N.S.W. and Victoria. Exit Cave received its share of attention and new discoveries have increased the known length to some 6½ miles. At Loons Cave, Ida Bay, the main passage was surveyed and cave fauna collected. The total length of passages is approx. ½ mile and the cave was found to pass below the railway. In the Florentine 3 new holes were explored, the largest to a depth of 250'. Skinny people can go even deeper!!!

The Christmas trip to Loongana made no great discoveries but nine caves were numbered and explored; one of them for the first time (suggested name "Swallownest Cave".) Albert, Therese and Mieke (Therese's sister), made a day trip to the Trowutta "Caves" while holidaying on the north-west coast. The limestone arch and lake are very spectacular and well worth a visit but the caves are hardly worthy of the name.

CLUB NEWS.

+ We were very sorry to see John(Dick) Marshall leave us to go to Canada. John came to us from S.S.S. and although he was here less than a year he made his name as one of the leading "Exit" explorers. In August last year he and Allan Keller descended Mini-Martin to set a new Australian depth record. Best wishes and good caving in Canada.

+ Frank and Peter Brown made a trip to the Nullarbor Plains and had their share of heat and torrential rain. Frank's car will never be the same again. Frank is wearing a pair of trousers that are now half a dozen sizes too big - the Nullarbor must be a wonderful place for slimming. By the way, ask him about the wombat holes when you see him!

+ Peter and Joan celebrated their second wedding anniversary by having the February general meeting at their place. A hungry and thirsty mob cleaned them out of food and drink. A very pleasant evening was had by all.

+ A letter has been received from the National Library requesting copies of Speleo-Spiel to see if they are worth preserving for posterity. We have our doubts but are greatly honoured.

+ Another letter has been received from the Scenery Preservation Board concerning the conservation of Exit Cave. The board can make no money available for a gate because the area is not a scenic reserve. The club was thanked for its offer to install a gate at cost price and was informed that Mr.Cashion had kindly agreed to make the money available during the 1968 - 69 financial year from a special fund.

+ The stainless steel plaque in memory of Edith Smith has now been placed in Edie's Treasure in Exit Cave.

+ Fluorescein tracing at Ida Bay scheduled for the weekend of February 10 - 11 has been postponed. It may now be carried out in the March long weekend if enough volunteers are available.

A.S.F. Committee Meeting.

The meeting was held at Orange, N.S.W. during the January long weekend. Some of the more important items were:

A.S.F. Handbook - The handbook has finally been printed in Canberra and the resulting 900 lbs. of paper has been returned to Melbourne where it will be collated and bound. It is expected to be available in a months time. The number of pages has increased to 332 and the editor has decided to raise the price to three dollars fifty. Those who have already ordered and paid for their copies will get

them at the old price but can pay the extra one dollar fifty if they wish!!!!

A.S.F. Award. - The federation has established an award to perpetuate the name of Edith Smith and to give recognition to outstanding contributions to Australian speleology. The award is to be known as the Edith Smith Award and an appeal will be opened for special donations from member societies and individuals. The award will be presented biennially to persons who have made a truly outstanding contribution to Australian speleology.

Nomenclature - A detailed report has been submitted by the convenor of the nomenclature committee, E. Hamilton - Smith. A copy is available from Albert on request.

+ At the meeting the club was ably represented by Ian Nankivell, secretary of C.S.S. We wish to thank him for his efforts on our behalf and the detailed report he has given us.

Trip Reports.

Loongana - 26 - 31/12/67.

Party:- Albert Goede(leader); John Bluhdorn and Michael Bourke (University of Queensland Speleos.)

The party spent four days in the area but one day was lost through rain. Camp was made near the low level bridge which crosses the Leven River to an abandoned farm. The property has been taken over by Ulstergren Ltd. who have started a poplar plantation. Nine caves were numbered and explored.

L.1. - Located 26/12/67, explored 27/12/67. Located in dry valley 20 yards downstream from where creek goes underground north-west of campsite. This is the same creek which flows through the "old tourist cave". Small entrance in bottom of shallow doline. Creek followed a short distance downstream until stopped by a maze of talus; 200 ft. of passage explored. Not worth another visit.

L.2. - Located 26/12/67, explored 27/12/67. Near L.1. Consists of several entrances where creek goes underground; several small passages going down to water. Very small. Not worth a visit.

L.3. - Leven Cave. Located and explored 27/12/67. Rather small but interesting system. Approx. 600' of passage - mostly higher level. Some formation. Second entrance found higher up in cliff. Cave crickets collected here appeared similar to those found at Gunns Plains.

L.4. & L.6. - Old Tourist Cave. Located 27/12/67, explored 28/12/67. Impressive 40' deep entrance doline with small lake at bottom. Passages going off in two directions. Both entrances numbered. Biggest cave so far explored in area. At least 1000' of passage. Much of it low-roofed. Good glow-worm displays. Some good formations. Cave crickets collected here appear to be same species as found at Mole Creek.

L.5. - Suggested name "Swallownest Cave". Located and explored 28/12/67. Found at base of cliff on northern side of Leven and just downstream from bridge where Loongana road crosses the river. Cave is approx. 1000 ft. long and gets progressively narrower until a siphon is reached. Contains largest population of cave crickets ever seen in any Tasmanian cave.

L.7. - Located and explored 30/12/67. Near where small stream goes underground. Blocked by timber 15' in. Not worth a visit.

L.8. - Short distance east of L.7. Goes in 40 ft. and ends in pool. It is possible to climb to a higher level which is also blocked. Not worth a visit.

L.9. - Tiger Cave. A vertical entrance leading into a small chamber with steeply sloping floor. Short passage leads off on one side. Not worth another visit.

The only cave previously explored by the club which we did not locate was Wicked Cave. Caves whose locations are not given in this report have been previously described in earlier trip reports. Loongana is a very pleasant place to spend a few days camping but the caves are not inspiring - unless you like crickets!

A. Goede.

Exit Cave - 6-7/1/68. Party:- Allan Keller, Peter Helman. No report.

Ida Bay - 13-14/1/68.

Party:- Albert Goede(leader), Brian Collin, Peter Brabon, Joan Brabon, Rodney Hughes, Bill Hodge, Dick Chuter, Robin Booth, Judy Robinson and Bernard Howe(Sat. only.)

The party left Hobart at 8 a.m. on Saturday with the aim of surveying and further exploring Loons Cave. The party made a half -

hearted attempt to enter the cave via the bottom entrance but retreated when it was obvious that it was going to be wet even though the water was lower than last time. The ninety foot shaft was laddered. Robin and Bernard went down first to get some photographs of others climbing down the shaft. They then returned to the surface for surface exploration. Rodney, Dick and Bill carried on with the underground exploration while Brian, Albert and Peter made a compass and tape traverse of the stream passage to where it is blocked by dolerite scree - length of passage surveyed was 1322 ft. The cave is very muddy in places and obviously floods in wet weather. The duck under flowstone between stations 14 and 15 would quickly flood under such conditions. The cave contains a good deal of formation but not much of high quality. Its most impressive feature are the three shafts which go up towards the surface. The cave is the home of a large population of millipedes and some were collected. Other cave life was also collected. The exploring party had a good look at the two side passages both of which go for some distance but eventually become too narrow to follow. They are also extremely muddy. The party emerged from the cave at 4p.m.

The following morning we had a look at a hole several hundred yards east of Loons Cave on the opposite side of the road and discovered by Robin and Bernard the previous day. After 50 ft. cave becomes too narrow to follow. This was followed by surface exploration uphill from the road. Several holes were found. One near Loons Cave was explored by Peter who found a 40 ft. shaft blocked at the bottom. Then back to the Hastings Hut for lunch and a leisurely trip back to Hobart in the afternoon.

A. Goede.

Florentine Valley - 21/1/68.

Party:- Albert Goede(leader), Therese Goede, Brian Collin, Jeanette Collin, Peter Brabon, Michael Burke, John Bluhdorn, Robin Booth, Judy Robinson and Bernard Howe.

A day trip to investigate three holes in a dry valley below Mt. Field West. They were shown to Albert by Don Frankcombe a fortnight earlier. The party followed the silver trail to the holes taking three quarters of an hour. There should be a law against surveyors using silver paint. The three holes are close together along the bottom of the valley. The upper one was the largest and deepest and the first pitch was descended by Brian Collin. It is a 150 ft. descent. The first 40' is steeply sloping followed by a 110' drop. It could not be tackled because one ladder had been left in Albert's car. Lowest hole was investigated next and was found to consist of two 30' drops separated by a slope. Total depth approx. 70'. The middle hole was even more disappointing. A 25' drop followed by a short slope. Total depth approx. 40'. Judy made her first ladder descent and discovered the joys of caving. Why is every hole in limestone surrounded by stinging nettles?

The upper hole was laddered again while Michael went back to the cars for another ladder. Peter was first down followed by Brian each carrying hefty rucksacks with rope and ladder for the next drop. Peter descended the second pitch which proved to be 90' deep with just enough ladder to reach the bottom. From there he explored to a muddy chamber where he discovered a narrow fissure going down another 60' approx. There was no sign of air movement. Lack of gear prevented further exploration. Depth reached approx. 250'. Hole rather wet and muddy. We had difficulty recovering ladders due to snags. A fine performance by Peter and Brian who did all the ladder work. They suggested the pot should be known as Tassy Pot because looking up at the bottom of the first pitch surface opening resembles outline of Tasmania. Suggested name for all 3 holes is Silver Trail Pots - come and argue it out at the next meeting.

A. Goede.

Exit Cave - 27,28,29/1/68.

Party:- Brian Collin, John Bluhdorn and Mike Bourke.

The inner base camp was reached at 11.30 on Friday night.

Sat., Sun. & Mon.:-

The creek north of station 107 was pushed for approx 100 ft. past the previous point reached by Allan Keller. This bit of trogging necessitated getting very wet and negotiating some bad talus, a good place to forget one's economic worries. The entrance to Allan and Peter Helman's new extension was event-

ually found at the end of the new high level formation chamber recently discovered by Brian and Jeanette.

Edith's plaque was fixed in the gypsum needle passage opposite the inner base camp.

General trogging included trips up the Entrance Ck. passage, Lost Squeeze Passage, The Mud passage and the passage west of the inner base camp.

Observations.

1. The track to the cave was completely dry.
2. The glow worm display was good.
3. The water flow was down to several cusecs.
4. No water appeared to be coming down the D'Entrecasteaux into the cave.
5. As much water appeared to be flowing in the N.W.creek as in the Entrance Ck. passage.
6. The chambers in the Entrance Ck. passage are large, the end blocked by talus and the stream enters by way of a fissure. The bottom of two shafts were observed and some air movement noticed.

Conclusions.

1. The creek north of station 107 cannot be pushed at creek level.
2. It is almost certain that the water in the N.W.CK. does not originate from the surface Western creek.
3. The Entrance Ck. passage and chambers are well worth more detailed exploration.

B.Collin.

Exit Cave - 12,13/2/68.

Party:- Brian and Jeanette Collin.

Purpose - Initial exploration of the area west of Western Creek. The hillside was traversed at approx. the same elevation from the waterfall on Western Ck. The small creek was followed to its junction with the D'Entrecasteaux. The D'Entrecasteaux was then followed up until a large creek was found entering from the north, presumably Waterfall Ck.

Observations:-

The vegetation on the hillside was reasonable and presented no real obstacle, the vegetation along the D'Entrecasteaux was typical rain forest with very easy and open walking. One outcrop of horizontally bedded limestone was found approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west of Western Ck., this outcrop was not investigated. No sign of sinkholes was seen on the hillside which contained numerous dolerite boulders. An outcrop of coarse grained sandstone was seen in the small creek where first encountered.

Conclusion:-

Further investigation needed especially near the limestone outcrop.
B.Collin.

FORWARD PROGRAMME.

March 2 - 4 Long weekend. Fluorescein tracing at Ida Bay or Mole Creek. Leader: P.Brabon.

March 5 General Meeting. 7.30p.m. 8 Bath St., Batt.Pt.

March 16 - 17 Exit Cave Area. Surface exploration near Western Ck. Leader: B.Collin.

March 27 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY 8p.m. 8 Bath St., Battery Point. This is your chance to join the new committee. Come and cast YOUR vote.

March 30, 31 Surface exploration near Damper Inn. Leader:- A.Goede.

The world is in a bad way - ESCAPE - Go caving!!!!